





## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## PRESS RELEASE

## **USAID Supports Agriculture Research in Afghanistan**

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | SEPTEMBER 1, 2012 – In partnership with the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a new Agriculture Research and Extension Development program (AGRED).

The new program supports the Afghan Government in building enduring, effective research and rehabilitation of agriculture research centers in seven agriculture zones in Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, and Paktya provinces.

In cooperation with MAIL and provincial- level Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAIL), USAID will organize field-level training to extension workers and farm communities throughout the life of program.

"Long term impact and sustainability cannot be guaranteed without active research and extension services. This project will provide extension and advisory services to Afghan farmers and strengthen the capacity of MAIL and DAIL to sustainably develop and deploy technology and knowledge and provide extension and advisory services," said Minister Rahimi.

USAID's AGRED program will build upon efforts of other U.S. Government-funded programs in Afghanistan, to increase MAIL/ DAIL capacity in the areas of Human Resource management/Development, procurement, financial management systems, and IT and communication.

Through the Afghanistan Research and Extension Development program, USAID will invest \$65 million over five years. Extension activities will reach 50 districts around the country. The program will increase professional training and tools for field educators, giving them resources to work directly with farming communities. The program will also initiate a research fund for MAIL to work with Afghan and regional universities to test, demonstrate, and deliver improved agricultural technologies.

Over the five year life, the program will benefit roughly 1.25 million farmers. An estimated 700,000 hectares of land will be utilized with improved management practices and technologies and a 1.4 million metic ton net increase in wheat production is projected in targeted areas, along with increases in production and quality of other crops, with t a 1.5 percent increase in equivalent fulltime private sector jobs. ###

For more information about USAID's programs, please visit: http://afghanistan.usaid.gov

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."







